

it, Ohio Public Employees Retirement System (OPERS) has announced that it will shift from offering two traditional Medicare plans to offering one traditional Medicare plan and one Medicare Advantage plan. I am concerned about this choice and would like to hear from you about it.

I know you all have been waiting for the opportunity to ask questions and share your comments, so let's transition to that right now.

IN MEMORY OF EARL PATY, JR.

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mr. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the memory of my dear friend Earl Paty, Jr., of Sheridan, Arkansas, who passed away October 17, 2007, at the age of 76.

Earl Paty, Jr., was a lifelong resident of Grant County where he built a solid foundation of community service that impacted countless lives and will forever be remembered by all who knew him. Whether serving others during his 40-year career at International Paper Co., or through his involvement with numerous local and state organizations, he devoted his lifetime to selflessly giving back to the citizens of Grant County and the State of Arkansas to make the world a better place.

Earl Paty, Jr., was a devout man of faith and a member of Moore's Chapel United Methodist Church. He took great pride in serving the church and congregation on the Administrative Board, as a Sunday School teacher and as a delegate to the Arkansas Annual Conference. He even rose to the level of becoming a certified lay speaker within the United Methodist Church. In addition, he was actively involved with numerous local organizations where he devoted his time and heartfelt energies to others. These included the Grant County Fair Board, the Grant County 4-H Club, the Southeast Arkansas District Development Cooperative and the Sheridan Masonic Lodge.

Perhaps my fondest memories of Earl Paty, Jr., are the many discussions we had over the years about politics, as he well understood how a career in public service could positively affect the lives of thousands. I always admired his fervor for politics which took him up the ladder from chairman of the Grant County Democratic Party to the Executive Director of the Senior Democrats of Arkansas. His contributions to the Democratic Party were recognized in 2003 when he was honored with the distinguished Harold Jinks Democratic Memorial Award. In fact, it was Earl Paty, Jr., who inspired me, through his passion and love of politics and public service, to seek elected office and run for the seat I now hold as U.S. Representative of Arkansas's Fourth Congressional District. For that, I am forever grateful. He was a man I truly looked up to and admired and I am blessed to have been able to call Earl a dear friend.

I send my deepest condolences to his wife of 53 years, Betty Sue Autrey Paty; his children Patricia Knighten, David Paty, and Leslie Tannahill; his two sisters Sue Walker and Faye Welch; and his nine grandchildren, two great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews. Earl Paty, Jr., will be greatly missed

in Sheridan, Grant County and throughout the state of Arkansas, and I am truly saddened by this loss.

**FEDERAL RAILROAD SAFETY
IMPROVEMENT ACT OF 2007**

SPEECH OF

HON. SILVESTRE REYES

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, October 17, 2007

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 2095) to amend title 49, United States Code, to prevent railroad fatalities, injuries, and hazardous materials releases, to authorize the Federal Railroad Safety Administration, and for other purposes:

Mr. REYES. Mr. Chairman, I rise today in strong support of H.R. 2095 the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act of 2007. This bill, introduced by my colleague Chairman JAMES L. OBERSTAR, provides a long-overdue reauthorization and reorganization of the Federal Railroad Administration. I am proud to count myself as a cosponsor of this legislation.

My district of El Paso has a rich history with the railroad industry. Following the arrival of the railroads in 1881, El Paso experienced enormous economic growth due in part to the railroad connections in the area. Today, my city's connections to the industry persist, and hundreds of my constituents go to work in the rail yards and along the tracks every day. Rail workers and the Americans who live near rail operations deserve the highest level of safety, and the Federal Railroad Safety Improvement Act provides just that.

Roughly 40 percent of all train accidents are the result of human factors, and, of this startling number, one in four results from fatigue. This bill will set new hours-of-service for our railroad workers and will help ensure they follow proper rest and shift periods. Under the proposed measures, personnel would receive at least 10 hours of rest per 24-hour period and would ultimately be limited to no more than 12 consecutive hours of shift work. The bill would also nearly double the number of rail safety inspection and enforcement staff. These changes would hopefully reduce the number of accidents caused by human error and fatigue and would help ensure safer working conditions for the approximately 1,100 rail workers of El Paso and across the United States.

In addition, H.R. 2095 would reorganize the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and rename it the Federal Railroad Safety Administration (FRSA). Over the 4-year period from 2007 to 2011, the FRSA would authorize \$1.1 billion for general expenses and grant programs. This legislation has taken into account many of the safety investigations and recommendations of the Department of Transportation, especially regarding human fatigue, defective tracks, and railroad crossings. With the reauthorization of this funding, I am confident that great strides will be made to improve the safety of the railroad industry in the United States.

Mr. Chairman, I ask that my colleagues join me in supporting this important legislation so that substantial improvements in Federal railroad safety can be made nationwide.

IN REMEMBRANCE OF J. ROY
GABRIEL

HON. JIM COSTA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mr. COSTA. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and dedication of Mr. J. Roy Gabriel, director of labor affairs for the California Farm Bureau Federation and chief operating officer of the Farm Employers Labor Service. Roy passed away suddenly this month in our Nation's Capital while representing the agricultural community on the issues he found most near and dear to his heart. His service and commitment to California agriculture and his passion and joy for life will be sorely missed.

A native of southern California, Roy attended California Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo where he earned a degree in Agricultural Business Management and a technical certificate in crops production. Armed with this knowledge and a love for farming, Roy became active in local politics, honing his negotiating skills. In 1973, he joined the California Farm Bureau as a legislative assistant and began his life long commitment to the betterment of agriculture in California. Recognizing Roy's breadth of experience and political prowess, Gov. Pete Wilson appointed Gabriel in 1998 to serve as chief deputy director of the California Department of Industrial Relations.

Roy's involvement with California farming has spanned 30 years. Throughout his lifetime, he has been a tireless voice in support of the valley's immigrant population. In the eighties, Roy helped more than 50,000 workers apply for legal immigration status under the Federal Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Like me, Roy believed the current agriculture labor shortage to be a crisis and fought to bring attention to the issue and enact reform legislation like AgJobs. The agricultural labor reform movement has lost a great champion in his passing.

We also shared a passion for rail transportation. He was not only an avid historian of nineteenth and twentieth century rail development, but he was respected for his knowledge and opinions on the subject matter. Roy was also an active supporter of today's national high speed and inner-city passenger rail efforts. For all these reasons, we will miss him dearly.

Mr. Gabriel's leadership and dedication will continue to inspire Californians for many years to come. A man of great principle and integrity, his passion and enthusiasm has touched many lives, including my own. It is with fond sadness that I remember and honor the life of my colleague and friend, Mr. J. Roy Gabriel.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. TIMOTHY V. JOHNSON

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

Mr. JOHNSON of Illinois. Madam Speaker, unfortunately yesterday, October 22, 2007, I was unable to cast my votes on H.R. 189, H.R. 523, and H. Res. 76.

Had I been present for rollcall No. 983 on suspending the rules and passing H.R. 189,